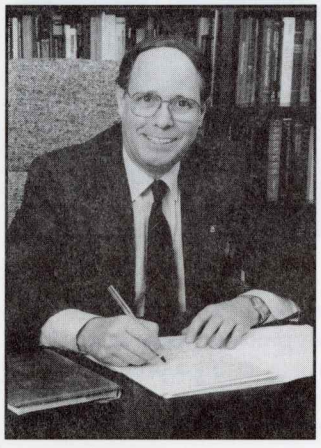
Concordia UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE STUDIES NEWS

Volume 5, no. 5 June 1990

From the Dean's Desk

Multiversities—A Case for Unity



Some time ago, our Rector, Dr. Patrick Kenniff drew attention to the fact that universities are institutions that have learned to reconcile contradictions and accept them as a reality of university life. For this reason alone it is appropriate to speak of "university" where the name "multiversity" might at first sight seem more apt.

In light of the ability of universities to cope and live creatively with their contradictions, we might ask what relevance the university experience has for the current debate on the future of our country.

Intellectual freedom and tolerance are among the most cherished and jealously guarded values of all university communities. It seems that university professors would rather honourably agree to disagree than deny each other the right to different value systems and ideologies. They remain satisfied members of their community even in the absence of concensus. This deep desire to preserve the right to differ might well serve as a paradigm for our current constitutional debate.

As academics we have a wonderful life. We need never grow old since our knowledge and professional wisdom continuously expand and mature throughout our professional and sometime even throughout our private lives. As professors and students, we are the heirs of traditions and customs that form the social and cultural foundation of diverse cultures. These traditions and customs are the basis on which differences in objectives, goals, and values are put aside for the sake of the common good. In spite of this freedom and tolerance, universities recognize and act collectively in the search for truth. They respond creatively and dynamically to our continuing need for new ideas, and general structures and models to deal with a changing world.

Our country is blessed with natural riches, beauty, and opportunities that make the world look upon us with envy and disbelief as we engage in the struggle for mutual respect and cultural identity. In Canada, universities are by tradition, vocation and constitution, the institutional counterparts of national elders. Let us learn from their "modus vivendi" and use the models they present to create a home in which our founding cultures can prosper. Let universities serve as reminders of how different values and objectives can be accommodated.

Multiversities are, by definition, "universities." They are living proof of Winston Churchill's recognition that "custom is stronger than logic." Universities work because of their reliance on "custom." They are relevant, creative and dynamic because they are dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the creation of knowledge driven by "logic." Their future is bounded only by their energy and imagination. We should all ask ourselves how the academic experience can be put to use for the good and prosperity of the country. Jean-Paul Satre once summed up his view on human existence by saying that "l'homme n'est point la somme de ce qu'il a, mais la totalité de ce qu'il n'a pas encore, de ce qu'il pourrait avoir." By virtue of its privileged vantage point, the academic community has an opportunity to contribute to the national debate.

M. E. Szabo
Dean

INSIDE

Dr. Charles Bertrand
Dean of Arts and Science . .p. 2

Amy Pinchuk
Diversity in Education . . . p.4

Upcoming Doctoral
Examinations . . . . . .p. 4

Graduate Education in the Faculty of Arts and Science

by Barbara Verity

The Faculty of Arts and Science at Concordia University continues expanding its graduate studies, building on recent successes and a new enthusiasm among students for acquiring degrees in the liberal arts and sciences.

A major impetus to graduate studies came last year when research funding increased by 26% over the previous year, bringing the total to more than $5 million. The Psychology Department became one of only two departments at Concordia to earn more than $2 million of research funding. Significant gains were recorded in other departments such as Biology, which doubled its research support.

A new Master's degree was added the same year to the existing nineteen Master's, nine Doctoral and ten Diploma programs in the Faculty. The new degree, a Master of Arts in Child Study, promises to continue the Faculty's tradition of developing bold, innovative programs.

Among the programs already making a mark in graduate studies across Canada is the Ph.D. in Humanities, an interdisciplinary program unique in North America. This doctoral program brings together normally distinct disciplines, promoting depth and independence of thought.

The success of another of these programs — the creative writing option in the Master of Arts in English — is seen in the high number of graduates whose degree work is taken on by commercial publishing houses.

As Charles Bertrand, the Dean of the Faculty, begins a second five year term this month (June), he looks ahead to even more expansion and success. "Concordia University and the professoriate at Concordia have matured," he says.

Several departments have reached a stage where they are ready to bring in new programs. "They have hired some new faculty, and the older faculty have become better known in the world of scholarship through publications and presentations at learned societies and conferences. So they feel that the time has come for them to enter the field of graduate work. I think they're correct," Dean Bertrand says.

He foresees that the next four years will see moves to establish several new programs. The earliest will be a Ph.D. in Biology, which will be mainly in Molecular and Cell Biology. Next will likely be a Ph.D. in Mathematics and Statistics, stressing Number Theory and Dynamical Systems. Others on the horizon are a Master's in Anthropology as well as Doctoral programs in Sociology and Political Science. Another possibility is an expansion of the Diploma in Translation to the Master's level.

Dean Charles Bertrand

"Another perceived need is the Diploma in Journalism," Dean Bertrand says. "The reputation in the few years since the program started has already begun to attract students from as far away as British Columbia. They recognize the quality of the educational experience that we offer in journalism at Concordia through the excellent faculty members on staff and the excellent people from out in the world of journalism who are willing to teach on a part-time basis."

The recent success of joint graduate programs with other Montreal universities is also causing the Faculty to look at developing more of these innovative ways of blending the best from each university. McGill University has recently decided to become part of the joint Ph.D. in Communication with Concordia, Univerisité de Québec à Montréal and Université de Montréal, which began three years ago. "I think McGill has probably come to see that we couldn't have as strong a program in any one of the universities as we can if we put all the resources together," Dean Bertrand says.

Work is also underway to explore possible joint programs with the Université de Montréal in Theological Studies and in English. There is already a joint doctoral program between Concordia and UQAM in Religion, which began two years ago, expanding the existing program at Concordia through the addition of the eight UQAM professors. This department was ready for an expanded program, having one of the best publication records of any Religion Department in Canada. Each year the 10 faculty members in Religion at Concordia produce an average of two or three books and between forty and sixty published articles and conference papers.

Increased Graduate Enrollment

Spurring on all this activity are increasing graduate student enrollments in most programs, Dean Bertrand says. Those without increases have begun turning around in the past year. "I'm very pleased at the Department of Economics graduate

program, for instance, which was in a bit of a decline. It has begun to increase significantly the number of students. It's a very important discipline in the Faculty. There were some years when I think students in Economics thought they could get a job on the market immediately. Now they've begun to realize that even in Economics, advanced degrees are important in terms of career and future development. So they've begun to come back to the department for graduate education."

Dean Bertrand points out that in the mid-1970s to the early '80s when job prospects were bleak, students who might have studied Philosophy or History or Economics said, "Wait a minute. What's going to happen to me at the end? Am I going to become a taxi driver or something like that with a Ph.D.?"

Times are changing. Now that the numerous faculty hired in the great expansion period of the universities in the 1960s are reaching retirement, many openings will occur throughout Concordia and other North American universities.

"So there's a much greater opportunity for people in graduate school," the Dean says. "We're beginning to feel it at the graduate level, but in two or three years we'll see an even more dramatic increase. The people who complete Ph.D.s in Arts and Science generally end up working at a university. So we're training people to do the work that we do now. It's a major mission in the Faculty of Arts and Science because we're training the next generation of scholars."

Dean Bertrand predicts that within the next ten years about 40% of the Arts and Science Faculty will need to be renewed. In certain departments Concordia could lose half the department in only a two year period from retirements. The same sort of trend will happen across Canada and has already started in the United States.

Important Mission

"That's especially crucial at the graduate level because we're talking about senior people. You have to be very careful about how you replace them to make sure that we continue on with the proper training of Ph.Ds. It's an extremely important mission for the Faculty of Arts and Science to have excellent Ph.D. programs more than anything else because we're training the future of the university. In the final analysis the surivival of the university depends on it," the Dean says.

Also giving impetus to the growth in graduate studies are changing attitudes in the workplace about the value of a liberal arts education, he explains. "Students are beginning to realize that business is finally taking seriously the argument that a strong liberal arts education is what they're looking for instead of a narrow education in certain fields. So students who might have taken Commerce, but really wanted to take Philosophy, are now taking Philosophy."

Enrollment is up at the undergraduate level in disciplines where it had gone down dramatically in the '70s and early '80s. Dean Bertrand says, "It is all part and parcel of an understanding that university education in Arts and Science is valuable in itself. This is also true at the graduate level."

Having seen growth in graduate studies in his first five year term, Dean Bertrand looks forward to the next five years with more changes in mind. At the same time, however, he believes that Concordia must also provide the best quality education possible at the undergraduate level. "The two are not in conflict," he insists. "The mission of Concordia combines both undergraduate and graduate teaching, and I think it's important that we don't forget that. I don't think we are. We have to always keep in mind that we're doing two things simultaneously that are complimentary and both are extremely important in their own way."

While Dean Bertrand continues to maintain Concordia's tradition of excellence in undergraduate training while developing graduate studies, he is also aiming to increase opportunities for women. "Employment equity is one of my priorities," he says. "If women recognize that their chances of getting a job when they come out of a graduate program are good to excellent, more of them will probably take the risk of spending an extra three or four years in graduate school to complete their degrees."

The number of women in graduate programs has traditionally been lower than that of men, particularly in the Sciences. "By increasing these numbers, more women will be prepared to go on to teach graduate studies," he says.

Support Group for Women

To achieve this, Dean Bertrand will establish a support group for women students, especially those in the Sciences. "Perhaps for one reason or another they feel unwelcome," he says. "So we want to make it quite clear that they are welcome and that they will be treated equally and fairly."

The support group will include women faculty with whom students can discuss issues and problems. "They will know that there's someone right there to talk to and be heard," he says.

Dean Bertrand will also be looking for new interdisciplinary programs to begin at the graduate level because of the success of the Faculty's Ph.D. in Humanities. "There may be other areas where we can combine two or three disciplines and provide a certain kind of training at the graduate level that heretofore we hadn't thought of as being a proper subject of study," he says.

"Environmental issues come to mind. They are so complex that there have to be interdisciplinary approaches to the solution of environmental issues," he says. A broad and varied approach to train people will enable them to look at these problems from a broad perspective — a necessary approach as we come into the next century.

The interdisciplinary approach, which usually involves different departments within the same Faculty, could even cover more than one Faculty, he adds.

International Ties

Dean Bertrand also anticipates forging more international ties, a recent trend at Concordia. Currently, the Arts and Science Faculty has exchange agreements in Educational Technology with the Shanghai International Studies University and the RRT in Madras; in Biology with the Microbiology Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Sciences in Bangalor; in Physics, Geology and the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) with the South East University in Nanjing; and in Economics and History with the People's University in Beijing.

The Faculty has begun discussions with the Microbiology Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences to offer a joint doctoral program. "Both sides have expressed a warm interest in the project," Dean Bertrand says.

Also in the air is talk of setting up a research centre in Communications related to developing countries. "We're always looking for new ways to bring the talent that is at Concordia to bear on problems of developing countries — or for that matter, our own country. It's important to do so in the realm of graduate studies," Dean Bertrand says.

Whether in joint programs or interdisciplinary studies, the next decade in Arts and Science looks bright as the Faculty continues building on the success of the '80s to launch even more innovative and challenging graduate programs to meet the needs of the 1990s.

Diversity in Education

by Amy Pinchuk

Most of my colleagues have graduated from university and found jobs in their chosen fields. A number of them soon realized, however, that these fields did not respond to their true career aspirations. It seems that they, like many others, have opted for expediency and the practical approach at the expense of the pursuit of areas of true interest to them. Although specialization in today's competitive work environment is often essential, I believe students must maintain and develop outside interests.

From high school through to doctoral studies, our educational system tends to funnel students into increasingly narrow specializations. The goal for students should be to achieve high levels of competence in their chosen fields while allowing for a certain degree of diversification. In today's environment, for example, it no longer makes sense to study just the arts or just the sciences. Every area of the arts can take advantage of the technical achievements of the past two decades. Undoubtedly, the arts can exist without high tech; however, the decision to exclude technological advancements should be a decision based on knowledge of these fields and not purely avoidance.

Students in all faculties who are intrigued by technology should become proficient in technological areas. Too many computer packages aimed at commerce, legal and social services are written by computer scientists who are not professionals in these fields, yet, these programs are often setting current professional standards. Physicists and engineers are realizing the need for a medical background in order to pursue interests in neural biology and computer imaging. Artificial intelligence courses teach the bible and work their way up to introductory psychology. Pattern recognition and natural language recognition can only benefit from concepts embodied in fine arts and linguistics. Particularly when immersed in a research environment, interdisciplinary solutions must be investigated.

In the case of graduate students, educational diversity is especially important since original contribution is the sought after goal. Originality is often the result of straying from the conventional path and applying concepts not generally encountered in one's field of specialization. It is clear that because undergraduate curricula are so compact, the faculties must specialize in order to achieve successful educational standards. Students must, however, persist and pursue outside interests wherever possible. Graduate students generally have the time and opportunity to follow personal interests, and, from my observations, these extra-disciplinary undertakings have often had positive benefits for the people concerned. Higher education no longer guaranties employment in any field, and even from the most practical point of view, special interests can provide students with that extra edge or special opening in the job market.

I have always pursued scientific studies while, at the same time, maintaining an interest in the fine arts As an undergraduate student, I obtained my first engineering job in a research lab as a result of my sculpting background. This lab was involved in computer modelling and analysis of electromagnetic devices. The three dimensional perception which I acquired from modelling with clay and stone found application in the computational modelling of the device geometries. Furthermore, a fine arts background aided me in the design of graphic displays used for communicating complex numerical results. Because this engineering field challenged not only my scientific abilities but also encouraged me to maintain contact with the fine arts, the area remained stimulating to me throughout almost a decade of university studies.

Scientists, such as Maxwell, needed math and physics to achieve their results. The English writers were proficient in many languages. Einstein was well versed in Eastern religion as well as Newtonian dynamics. Leonardo da Vinci could paint works of art and design weapons. The point that I am driving at is that creativity and originality require input from a variety of disciplines. In the pursuit of one's chosen field, areas of special interest should not be abandoned since they may well be the key to one's success.

Amy Pinchuk was the 1989 winner of the Prix d'Excellence. She is presently Senior Engineer, Electromagnetics Division, for MPB Technologies Inc.

Upcoming Doctoral Examinations

HOWELL, Andrew J.
Psychology
Date: June 4, 1990 at 10:00 a.m.
Location: ER 101-14
Title: *Mood, Depression, and the Suppression of Positive and Negative Self-Referent Thoughts*

DANTU, Ramanamurthy
Electrical and Computer Engineering
Date: June 5, 1990 at 10:00 a.m.
Location: H-762
Title: *A Computer Vision System for VLSI Wafer Probing*

BOUDREAU, Spencer
Religion
Date: June 20, 1990 at 10:00 a.m.
Location:
Title: *From De Jure to De Facto: The Identity and Viability of Catholic Religious Education in the English-Catholic Public Schools of Quebec*

BERGERON, André
Psychology
Date: June 29, 1990 at 10:00 a.m.
Location: H-769
Title: *Psychophysiological and Attentional Response Patterns in Hypothetically Psychosis Prone Adolescents*

The examinations for the above students will take place in the Hall Building, 1455 de Maisonneuve West, Montreal, with the expection of A. Howell's exam which will take place at 2155 Guy, Montreal.

Editorial Committee :
Chair: M. E. Szabo
Editor: D. MacFadden
Editorial Asst.: A-M. Laurin
Writer: B. Verity, A. Pinchuk
Photographer: P.. Hrasko
Printing: Concordia Printing Services

Published by:
The Division of Graduate Studies
Mailing Address:
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8
Location: *2145 Mackay Street*
Telephone: *(514) 848-3800*
Fax Number: *(514) 848-2812*